



# Department Updates

December 2016

## Finance

**Jodi Busch**  
Finance Director

The Finance Department had a very busy fall season focusing on the 2017 budget. At the November 7th County Board meeting, a County Levy was set at \$20,210,095; an increase from 2016 of \$640,835 or 3.27%. Once the budget was approved, it was full speed ahead as the County Apportionment calculations were finalized and sent out to the municipalities. Soon after, Levy Limit Worksheets were completed and sent to the DOR. Next came the setup of the 2017 Departmental Budgets in our financial software system. Did you know that the County Budget is divided up between more than 1400 separate departmental accounts? As you can imagine, it takes a great deal of time

throughout the budget process to enter, calculate, and check, to insure that everything ties out to what was approved. Now with just a few more tasks to complete, we will be ready for 2017.

In addition to preparing and looking ahead to the New Year, we are also looking back over 2016 to begin our year-end processes. CliftonLarson-Allen will be onsite the week of December 19th for their annual preliminary audit visit. By spending a few days here in December, they can take care of some of the more tedious tasks, which will help streamline the audit process when they come again in the spring.

As we move into 2017, we will start reconciling 2016

accounts and prepare the necessary workpapers. W-2's, 1095's, and 1099's will be calculated and sent out in January, and we will be assisting departments with their year-end deposits, payments, and any necessary adjusting entries through February. Late February and March will consist of closing the books County-wide, and in April we will be putting everything together for when the Auditors visit in early May. The whole process of closing the year and preparing for the audit takes several months to complete. The Finance Team will be working together through the winter to insure deadlines are met and all reconciliations are completed accurately.

## Treasurer's Office

**Vonnie Ritchie, Treasurer**

### Tax Deed

The Tax Deed property sale was done through the Wisconsin Surplus Online Auction site on November 14, 2016. Four of the six parcels listed for sale were sold. The two remaining parcels are vacant lots, one is in the City of Barron and the other is in the Village of Dallas. The Highway Dept. will be razing four buildings that were taken through the tax deed process this year and the land will be sold at the next auction. If you

would like the details on any of these properties, please contact my office.

The first phase of the Tax Deed action has begun on the 2013 delinquent taxes. The formal action will be filed and published in February, 2017. The total 2013 delinquent taxes were \$155,540.91 as of December 1, 2016.

### 2016 Real Estate Taxes

The 2016 taxes are in the process of being calculated. Many of you may have received your tax bills

from your Municipal Treasurer and the 1<sup>st</sup> installment is due by January 31, 2017, to your municipal treasurer with the exception of Town of Almena. We have contracted with the Town of Almena to collect their tax this year along with their personal property tax and dog license. Payment information and amounts due are listed on your tax bill. Tax information is now available online on the Barron County website.

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## Sheriff's Department

### Chris Fitzgerald Sheriff

The Sheriff's Dept along with Barron County Human Services, Barron County Community Coalition and several others have held Meth Town Hall meetings over the past year to help us get out information on what meth is and what you can do to help. They have been very successful and we will continue to work together as a county to help slow down the drug problem. This remains our biggest issue across the county but looking forward to 2017 I am very excited and hopeful that we will do some great things and take some big steps to rid this issue in the county.

The 6th Annual "Shop with a Cop" was held at Wal-Mart. Over 45 Law Enforcement from

across the county came together to make 60 kids and their families Christmas season a little brighter.

These kids, chosen from area Boys and Girls Clubs and Kinship programs, were paired with a law enforcement officer and were able to buy presents for members of their families and a little something for themselves. After shopping, the kids and the cops went to the AmeriVu Inn and Suites Banquet Room and Adventures Restaurant catered a free meal for everyone.

This program would not be possible if it were not for the many generous people who gave their time or financial support: Johnson, Agen, Kupferschmidt and Associates, Barron County Tavern League, Wal-Mart, Pepsi, New Scandinavian Church, Law

Enforcement Foundation of Barron County, Rice Lake Men's Club, Cumberland, Barron and Chetek area businesses, Adventures Restaurant and the AmeriVu Inn and Suites.

"This is one of the greatest nights of the year for local law enforcement and this year was even better than past years. Thanks go out to all the law enforcement officers who took time to help make these kids' Christmas special. I have always said "I don't know who has the bigger smile on nights like this - the cops or the kids". Thank you all for the support you gave law enforcement in 2016 and we are looking forward to a safe and healthy 2017.

### 2016 Shop With A Cop



## Aging & Disability Resource Center

### Leslie Fijalkiewicz Director

Several exciting things are happening at the ADRC right now! Medicare D open enrollment has ended. Between October 15<sup>th</sup> and December 7<sup>th</sup>, Medicare beneficiaries must decide on which of the 27 drug plans will best fit with their prescription needs in the coming year. As you might guess, it is a VERY busy time at the ADRC because evaluating and enrolling in a drug plan has to be done online. This is an arduous task even for computer savvy people and many Medicare beneficiaries do not use a computer.

The ADRC has been awarded a grant to participate in an UW-Madison research project. We are quite thrilled because the research is being done on a program our agency designed. For more information about this, please visit our website at [www.adrcconnections.org](http://www.adrcconnections.org) and read the article Beneficial Bites Selected For Research.

We also just found out that we are the recipient of a DOT grant that will fund 80% of the cost of two new vans for use by our AddLIFE Transit program. We are expecting delivery of the vehicles in late 2017 or early 2018. The value of this grant is approximately \$66,000. This

also means we will be selling a few vehicles in the months to come.

And speaking of our transportation program for elderly and persons with disabilities, I want to mention that, like the highway department the ADRC is advocating for a sustainable transportation funding solution. The ADRC's transportation program (AddLIFE Transit) is also funded through the fuel tax and registration fees. This year we will provide about 12,000 trips for medical, nutritional, employment, social, and personal purposes. These rides help people remain in their home and out of the more costly publicly-funded long term care programs...like all of our services, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

The ADRC recently learned that the Dementia Care Specialist program will be fully funded through 2017. This is good news but it is our hope that this program continue beyond that and be included in the next biennial budget. Ideally, we would like to see legislation that provides continued funding and expansion of this vital program across the state. The support for this program within Barron County government has been tremendous and we sincerely thank you for that!

As we move into 2017, there is no doubt we will be handling many questions about the future of Social Security and Medicare. Already, I am getting no less than 10 emails a day that address the possible changes. Our biggest challenge will be sorting through the rhetoric, posturing and sensationalizing of opposing viewpoints in an effort to educate folks. We can't assume that the thousands of people we serve feel the same way about a particular issue. As advocates our responsibility is to educate, empower and motivate people to take action. Sometimes that education might involve looking at someone's personal situation and explaining how a proposed law could affect them, but at the end of the day, we want people to use their own voice to influence or effect change.



## Department of Land Services

### Real Property Lister

The Real Property Lister is in the midst of *TAX SEASON*. Within a couple week period seventy nine unique mill rates are being calculated to apply to the assessed value of all real estate and personal property in Barron County. In order to gather all the information for the process it is necessary to communicate with local, county and state government as well as the Department of Public Instruction, technical college, sanitary districts and lake districts. Over 41,000 tax bills will be mailed to Barron County residents; state law requires that they be mailed by the third Monday of December.

### Nonmetallic Mining Program

Surveys to all nonmetallic mining sites have been completed using GPS and county drone equipment. Sand and gravel operations totaled 813 active acres while Industrial Sand operations totaled 1246 active acres. Permit renewal documents have been mailed out to all operators, who will be required to comply with the approved financial assurance increase that will go into effect January 1, 2017. Financial assurance requirements are as follows: A \$5,000 per acre minimum will be set for mines with less than 25 unreclaimed acres. Mines between 26 and 40 unreclaimed acres will be \$7,000 per acre with financial assur-

ance worksheet option. Mines greater than 40 unreclaimed acres will be required to submit a financial assurance worksheet. The financial assurance worksheet shows detailed reclamation work and costs to complete the approved reclamation plan.

No new or amended permit applications have been submitted for 2016. Sand and Gravel operations have shown an increase in active acres from 799 (2015) to 813 (2016). Industrial Sand operations have also shown an increase in active acres from 1,182 (2015) to 1,246 (2016). Overall activity at sand and gravel operations has been consistent with past years. Activity at Industrial Sand operations has been slow, but is expected to increase second quarter of 2017. Site visits have shown that reclamation is being partially completed at some mine sites. Five (5) notices of completion have been received by Barron County, totaling approximately 25 reclaimed acres. Inspections for reclamation completion are performed during peak growing season, July through August.

### GIS

Barron County has participated in the Farmland Preservation Program for more than 30 years, since the adoption of the Farmland Preservation Plan in 1979. In 2009, the Working Lands Initiative became state law and

with the new law came changes to the Farmland Preservation program. These changes required Barron County to update the Farmland Preservation Plan and also portions of the Barron County Land Use Ordinance pertaining to the Exclusive Agricultural (A-1) District which is certified for the Farmland Preservation program. All required revisions are now complete. Land use and land division standards in the A-1 district have been amended, and landowners are welcome to stop by to discuss any questions or concerns they may have regarding the ordinance or the Farmland Preservation program.

Scanning and indexing of the Zoning permit and hearing files has been completed. As we mentioned in our last department update, these records are available 24/7 via the Barron County GIS website. Staff continues to augment these records and to improve the accuracy of associated databases.

Our department has applied for 2017 Wisconsin Land Information Program (WLIP) grants which will allow further improvement of department records and more accurate records for staff and the public. Our office continues to work with the Department of Administration to provide required data for the Statewide Parcel Map Database Project and will be submitting

Version 3 of this data in the first quarter of 2017. Participation in this project, as well as completion of required benchmarks, allows Barron County to request Base Budget, educational, and Strategic Initiative Grants from the WLIP.

### **County Surveyor**

Barron County was surveyed into one mile square sections in 1852-1855 by government surveyors. This survey is referred to as the PLSS (Public Land Survey System). All property descriptions in Barron County are based on the PLSS. It is the County Surveyors responsibility to maintain corner markers of the PLSS. The State Land Information Program which provides funding to Barron County has a benchmark that requires the completion and integration of the PLSS. Requirements are: (1) Rediscovery of PLSS corner monuments and physical re-monumentation of corners without existing monuments, (2) Establishing accurate coordinates on these corners based on a modern datum, (3) Posting tie sheets online for these corners and (4) Integrating all county PLSS corners into the county parcel fabric. After several years this project has been completed with the exception of some tweaking of the county parcel map due to updated corner information. Barron County is the 13th county out of 72 in Wisconsin to complete this benchmark.

### **Compliance Technician**

Thus far in 2016 we have issued 425 Land Use Permits, 67 for new dwellings, and numerous land use violations have been brought into compliance.

In July of 2015, significant changes were made to the Wisconsin Shoreland Protection Program standards which impacted county shoreland zoning ordinances throughout the State. Final revisions have been made to the shoreland related sections within the Barron County Land Use Ordinance to reflect these changes in State Code. On December 21<sup>st</sup>, a public notice will be posted regarding the January 4, 2017 public hearing to amend affected sections of the Land Use Ordinance affected by the State shoreland zoning code changes.

### **Zoning Technician**

To date, we have reviewed and issued 240 sanitary permits including 85 new systems, and also reviewed 187 soil tests this year. Ninety-one (91) new rural address numbers (fire #s) were assigned and we continue to work with landowners to correct inaccurate numbering and sign placement to assist emergency service personnel in quickly responding to those in need.

### **County Conservationist**

The majority of our funding for projects comes in the form of grant money from Wisconsin DATCP and we had a successful year of installing conservation practices despite the persis-

tent rains. Since the beginning of 2014, Rice Lake has received 22.3 inches of precipitation more than normal. Normal for a year is 32 inches. This has caused some serious erosion situations to occur in crop fields. Grassed waterways were constructed on four area farms to correct these issues. Other waterways were established, completing a Barnyard Runoff project began in 2015. A Milkhouse Waste Collection system was also installed this year. Milkhouse waste is has many potential pollutants; in certain situations milk itself can cause as much or more damage to a stream than manure does. This system collects the milkhouse waste and pumps it to the manure storage facility where it is stored until spread on fields.

Two barnyard projects were also completed. The simplest and most cost effective method of pollution reduction is diverting water flow from the cattle feeding area. Both of these beef operations are had water running through the feeding area. We worked with them to design systems to get the cattle to grass pastures, while avoiding the water.

We also partnered with the Sand Lake Lake District to address a gully leading down to the lake. While normally our goal is to work to infiltrate stormwater, we had a steep, wooded gully so building a pond wasn't possible, nor was

## Department of Land Services (Continued)

constructing a grassed waterway. So a system with 350' of 24" HDPE pipe was installed to get the water to the lake without it causing any erosion. The Gerald Mlejnek Barnyard project was featured in DATCP's 2015 Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Annual Report. We are very pleased with how this project turned out. <https://datcp.wi.gov/Documents/LandWaterAnnualReport2015.pdf>

We are starting to plan projects for 2017. Addressing the State Runoff Prohibition of uncontrolled runoff from barnyard areas remain a priority, but these are decreasing in number, so work on protecting cropland from erosion will increase.

### Conservation Planner

We continue to work with landowners to achieve compliance with State standards and prohibitions to allow their participation in the Farmland Preservation Program, which offers a tax credit of \$7.50 per acre on eligible property. Once compliance is achieved, a Certificate of Compliance (COC) is issued to the landowner, which is necessary to claim the tax credit. We have issued 113 COCs so far with several more scheduled for approval in January and February.

One component of compliance is a certified nutrient management plan on all acres receiving nutrients. In 2016, we provided cost sharing and/or technical assistance to get certified plans

on 10,318 acres in Barron County.

### Tree Sale!

As a service to Barron Co. residents and landowners, each year we purchase thousands of trees in bulk and redistribute them at cost! The trees are 4 yr. old bare root transplants, sold in bundles of 25 for \$20.00. We will begin taking orders on January 3rd until we run out of stock. You will not need to pay for the trees until the day of the sale on April 28th. To place your order, please call our office at [715-537-6375](tel:715-537-6375). We will be happy to work with you to determine which variety of trees fits your needs and your property!

## Human Resources

Rachael Richie, HR Director

### New/Replacement Positions

Position Title	Office/Department	Incumbent	Date Filled	New/Replacement
Heavy Equipment Operator	Highway	John Holub	11/1/16	New
AODA Specialist	Health/Human Services	Ron Lessard	1/1/17	New
Economic Support Specialist (2)	Health/Human Services	Recruiting		Replacement
Drug/Alcohol Court Case Manager	Health/Human Services	Recruiting		New
I&A Specialist	ADRC	Recruiting		Replacement
Correction Officer	Sheriff	Recruiting		Replacement

### Internal Transfers

Employee	Prior position	New position	Date	New/Replacement
Candace Rand	Correction Officer	Assistant Clerk of Court	11/14/16	Replacement
Kim Gogan	I&A Specialist	Disability Benefit Specialist	12/12/16	Replacement